

OUTGOING-TELEGRAM

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Department of State

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Authority

HR-m/SG

901113

6/19/91

PARIS PASS UNCINCOUR, THURSTON, AND WEST

Your 1409 and 1834

962.72/2-2059

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US Government has long considered that mere Soviet refusal to cooperate in BASC (Including Soviet withdrawal) would not affect Western rights fly Berlin air corridors nor per se constitute hazard to flight safety. Actual danger to aircraft in flight would be created only by other Soviet actions directly affecting flight operations. Thus US considers Soviet refusal cooperate BASC as essentially political rather than operational matter.

While we have no desire withhold from airborne pilots information affecting safety of their aircraft we see no reason why they need be informed of QUOTE political UNQUOTE developments by air traffic control agencies. Any communication of such information without interpretive

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237

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comment or instructions which relates that info to conduct of flights already underway would be worthless from safety standpoint.

Department has noted standing instructions of British Controller and agrees tripartite position essential. Had understood that tripartite policy calls for uniform position on non-routine corridor matters and wonders whether unilateral establishment of position by British consistent with this policy. Rather than provisional instructions suggested by Embassy or conforming to British would prefer Embassy press for tripartite agreement on interim position that mere Soviet refusal cooperate BASC would not of itself constitute hazard to aircraft in flight; nor require notification to pilots in flight but should be reported to Embassies for relay to airline managers Germany. Decision as to whether subsequent flights should be dispatched in face of Soviet refusal cooperate BASC must rest with individual airlines and pilots pursuant respective national laws and regulations, subject any understandings which managements have with their respective governments. Lines of understanding which US considering suggesting to Pan Am already known to Embassy and subject of separate Department telegram. When firm understanding reached between US Government and Pan Am US would hope to achieve broader tripartite understanding to replace interim tripartite position on limited BASC issue as suggested herein.

Embassy will note foregoing deals with in-flight reports to pilots by ATC agencies. PAA has own communication channels to airborne aircraft.

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While US of course could not prevent company from communicating such information as it desires, Department has no reason believe company would report essentially political developments. In any event this matter would be subject to further discussion between parties concerned as envisaged para 1c page 4 of draft letter to Gray.

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239